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CALENDAR REFORM.

BY GEORGE M. SEARLE.

In the *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* for April of this year there is an article by Dr. RALPH E. WILSON on "The Reform of the Calendar," a subject which seems to be attracting considerable attention lately. A plan for this purpose occurred to the present writer some years ago and was published in the *Catholic World* magazine at that time.

It seems to be as complete a solution of the difficulties now felt to exist as any that can be proposed, and it may be well to call attention to it just now. It has the special advantage of making every day of every month fall on the same day of the week in every year.

It simply consists in substituting for the extra *day* in our present leap years an extra *week*, in the following manner:—

It so happens that the cycle of 400 years on which the Gregorian calendar is based contains exactly 20,871 weeks. There are in it 303 years of 365 days and 97 years of 366 days; or, what comes to the same thing, to 400 years of 365 days are added 97 extra days, giving a total of 146,097 days or 20,871 weeks.

If, then, we make the year to consist, not of 365 days, with an occasional extra *day*, but of 52 weeks, with an occasional extra *week*, we shall have a calendar equivalent to the Gregorian, if we put in it 329 years of 52 weeks and 71 years of 53 weeks; for $329 \times 52 + 71 \times 53 = 17,108 + 3,763 = 20,871$.

If we make every fifth year (i. e. every year whose date is divisible by 5) to have 53 weeks, we should have, of course, 320 years of 52 weeks and 80 of 53. The number of 53-week years must then be reduced by nine. This is easily arranged by striking out from them those divisible by 50, and one more, which can be put anywhere in the cycle; perhaps, preferably, at its beginning or end, as in the Gregorian calendar. If, however, this extra year of 52 weeks were put at the twenty-fifth year before or after the middle of the 400-year cycle, the next one

might be taken as occurring in 2175 or 2225, and the public would not need to worry about it at all for a long time.

Now, as to the extra week occurring, regularly, every five years, the question would naturally occur where to place it. It would probably be best to simply add it on to some month. It would naturally be considered as a sort of jubilee week, to be celebrated in some way, and be best put in at some time of the year when the weather would be fairly good all over the world. Perhaps the end of April might be the best time. In the jubilee year April would then have 37 days. That would make every year begin on Saturday, if the jubilee week were supposed to begin on Sunday. Perhaps a better time for it might be at the end of September, which would make the year begin on Sunday or at any rate on the same day of the week with which this extra or jubilee week begins.

But of course such details could be easily settled. The principal advantage to be gained by such a calendar would be to have all fixed dates in the year fall always on the same day of the week; and if the special rule now used for the calculation of Easter Sunday were dropped, and that day fixed at some day near its average time (April 8th) the fixed and movable calendars of the church would be settled once for all.